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**NASA**

**PROCUREMENT CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

**AND TRAINING POLICY**

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**April 2007  
FOREWORD**

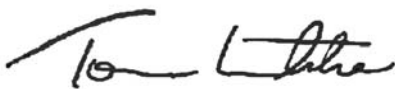
This handbook is issued under the authority of Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Letter 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce* dated April 15, 2005, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum, *The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program*, dated January 20, 2006, which implement the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA). This handbook prescribes procedures for a NASA career development program for procurement personnel, consistent with the general policies and authorities stated in the Policy Letter and Memorandum.

This handbook applies to all procurement workforce personnel who are in or desire to be in the contracting and purchasing fields. Additional career fields may be added if determined to be applicable by the Assistant Administrator for Procurement.

The primary objective of our career development program is to provide procurement professionals with standardized, consistent, and high quality training to prepare them to meet the future challenges facing the agency. True professionalism in procurement involves much more than knowledge of the rules, regulations and procedures.

Procurement professionals must develop good business management and judgment skills, learn how to deal with dilemmas encountered in acquisition programs, and develop the necessary skills to work effectively with other acquisition professionals and with contractors. Our Headquarters and Center training offices provide a variety of training classes that are beneficial to individuals regardless of their career field. In addition to completing procurement related training, procurement personnel are encouraged to participate in a professional development program as well. The NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement fully supports the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Program. Attaining and maintaining a FAC-C ensure that each procurement professional has a solid foundation in procurement. Further, the FAC-C demonstrates that the individual has a firm commitment to the procurement profession.

Copies of this policy may be downloaded from the NASA Procurement Library (<http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/library.html>).



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# CHAPTER I

## **DEFINITIONS**

Acquisition – The acquiring of supplies or services (including construction) by contract with appropriated funds by and for the use of the Federal Government through purchase or lease, whether those supplies or services already exist or must be created, developed, demonstrated, and evaluated.

Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) – The individual, appointed by the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), responsible for ensuring that the agency's acquisition workforce meets OMB requirements.

Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) – A web-accessible database developed by the Federal Acquisition Institute to track the training records of the acquisition workforce.

Acquisition Positions – Positions with duties that fall within an acquisition category. These positions are normally located in headquarters and field organizations.

Acquisition Position Categories – Functional subsets of acquisition positions. These positions include purchasing, contracting, cost estimating, financial management, program management, facilities, property, information technology (IT), and resource management.

Acquisition Workforce – The personnel who perform the acquisition mission. The acquisition workforce includes permanent civilian employees who occupy acquisition positions, such as those who work in the contracting, cost estimating, financial management, program and project management fields.

Agency Procurement Training Office – The office responsible for the administrative and operational activities of the NASA career development program.

Career Development – The professional development of employee potential by integrating the capabilities, needs, interests, and aptitudes of employees in acquisition positions through a planned, organized, and systematic method of training and development designed to meet organizational objectives. Career development is accomplished through a combination of work assignments, job rotation, training, education, and self-development programs.

Career Ladder – A career ladder is a series of developmental positions of increasing difficulty in the same line of work, through which an individual may progress to a journeyman level as part of personal development and performance in that career field.

Career Levels – Categories of education, training, and experience standards that provide the framework for potential progression in a career field. There are three career levels: (I) Entry, (II) Intermediate, (III) Advanced

Career Path – The range of opportunities at each career level and the optimum route for vertical and horizontal progression in a career field.

Center Procurement Training Coordinator – Individual at each NASA Center responsible for managing procurement training activities at the Center.

Chief Acquisition Officer – The Agency official responsible for the development and management of an agency's entire acquisition workforce. The NASA Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) is the Deputy Administrator. At NASA, these responsibilities are delegated to the Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer who is the Agency's Senior Procurement Executive and Assistant Administrator for Procurement.

Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) – Skills currency training completed after receipt of any level Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting. CLPs can be earned through training, professional activities, education, and experience. A minimum of 80 CLPs are required every two years to maintain certification.

Defense Acquisition University (DAU) – The Department of Defense education and training institution that provides training to the Defense acquisition workforce and some civilian agencies. DAU Headquarters is located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Elective – Any training opportunity, as agreed to by the individual's supervisor, related to the employee's job, necessary for career development, or for cross training. An elective must be at least 16 hours in length.

Equivalent Course – A course certified by DAU to be comparable to a designated mandatory core course. An equivalent course is acceptable for use toward the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting.

Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) – The government-wide designation verifying that an individual meets the mandatory education, training, and experience standards established for a career level (Levels I, II, and III) in the procurement field.

Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) – An organization that promotes the professionalism of the Federal acquisition workforce through career development, including sponsored training and implementation of the FAC-C Program. FAI is part of the General Services Administration, but receives direction from OFPP. FAI is co-located with DAU at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. FAI also provides policy guidance on training and certification for contracting officer's technical representatives and program and project managers.

Fulfillment – The process by which acquisition work force members may satisfy mandatory training requirements based on previous experience, education, and/or alternative training successfully completed and documented based on course competency standards.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) – Document used to plan an employee's education, training, and experience needs for progression in the procurement career field. Developing the plan is a joint effort of the employee, supervisor, and possibly others in the training and/or acquisition fields.

Mandatory Core Curriculum – A course of study directed by OFPP that meets the FAC-C education, training and experience requirements for the procurement field.

Procurement Functional Advisor – The individual who has responsibility for the NASA Procurement Career Development and Training Program and Policy. The Procurement Functional Advisor works closely with the ACM.

Qualification Standard – Individual standard developed by the Office of Personnel Management for General Series (GS) employees.

Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) – The SPE is the senior Agency official appointed in accordance with the "Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act" responsible for managing and directing of the organization's procurement system and implementing agency-unique procurement policies, regulations, and standards. The NASA SPE is the Assistant Administrator for Procurement and Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer.

## **Background**

Over the last two decades, strong emphasis has been placed on improving the acquisition workforce. This focus resulted in the Government's implementation of a number of new policies and legislation.

In 1991, Congress enacted the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). Applicable to Department of Defense (DOD) agencies only, this Act required the establishment of: 1) career development programs with mandatory training in acquisition-related responsibilities for advancement to critical acquisition positions; more rigorous qualification requirements than were applicable to civilian agency acquisition positions both at entry level and for promotion within critical acquisition positions; 2) a Defense Acquisition University; and 3) a budget line item to pay for the mandatory training. The Act prompted DOD to develop a plan to establish education, training, and experience standards for their acquisition positions and to provide a common foundation of knowledge necessary to ensure that the acquisition workforce was fully proficient.

DAWIA raised concerns that the civilian agencies' workforce would be perceived as being markedly less professional than its DOD counterpart. To address these concerns, the OFPP issued Policy Letter 92-3, dated June 24, 1992, to establish policies and a Government-wide standard for skill-based training for the Federal acquisition workforce. The OFPP policy letter established a set of contracting competencies and required contracting professionals to complete course work and related on-the-job training in order to attain an appropriate level of skill in each contract management duty. The policy letter was implemented as a change to Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 1.603-1, linking the selection and appointment of contracting officers to OFPP's

standards for skill-based training in performing contracting and purchasing duties. To further this end, in 1996 the Clinger-Cohen Act required civilian agencies to establish education, training, and experience requirements for civilian agencies comparable to those established in 1991 for DOD.

The National Performance Review directed the Federal Government to establish a well-trained, professional, procurement workforce--one that would keep pace with the demands placed upon it by an increasingly complex procurement process. Moreover, in 1994 Executive Order (E.O.) 12931, Federal Procurement Reform was issued and it required agencies to establish career education programs for procurement professionals.

In 2003, Congress passed the Services Acquisition Streamlining Act (SARA) and created the position of the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO). The CAO is responsible for the development and management of an agency's entire acquisition workforce. NASA's procurement career development and training program implements the applicable portions of SARA, OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, and the OMB Memorandum on the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting dated January 2006. The new requirements placed on acquisition personnel are designed to increase efficiency and effectiveness on the job, and potentially enhance their opportunities in the job market. This policy provides the NASA procurement workforce with the necessary information and guidelines to plan their career development and become more competitive for higher level procurement positions.

#### **NASA Implementation of the Qualification Standard** (Education Requirements)

Effective January 1, 2000, NASA determined that all GS-1102 employees continuously employed in GS-1102 series positions since January 1, 1998, or earlier, met the qualification standard for the positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. Further, employees in GS-1102 series positions at grades 5 through 12 met the new basic requirements for other GS-1102 positions through grade 12. Employees in GS-1102 series positions at grades 13 through 15 met the qualification standard for other GS-1102 series positions at the current grade level. All employees, at the GS-13 and above level were required to meet the new standard requirements to qualify for promotion to a higher grade, effective January 1, 2000. Additionally, all employees are required to meet the education and specialized experience requirements for higher level positions. Qualification standard compliance determinations are made by the Office of Procurement and the Office of Human Resources.

In accordance with the qualification standard, all GS-1102 employees must complete a bachelor's degree or 24 semester hours in business-related fields to enter the GS-1102 contracting series at grade levels 5 through 12. Employees in GS-1102 series seeking a new position at grades 13 through 15 must possess both the bachelor's degree and 24-semester hours in business-related classes. They must also meet the training, continuous learning, and specialized experience requirements. The 24 business hours may be included in, or in addition to, coursework taken to complete the bachelor's degree.

## **Program Objective**

The objective of this program is to provide procurement professionals with a standardized, consistent, and high quality training program in preparation for future career opportunities and challenges ahead. As procurement professionals, all NASA GS-1102 and GS-1105 personnel are expected to work toward attaining a FAC-C designation. Once achieved, a FAC-C is maintained through earning and documenting 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) every two years.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Acquisition Career Manager (ACM)**

An individual with acquisition experience appointed by the CAO, or designee, to lead the agency's acquisition career management program. The ACM is responsible for ensuring that the agency's acquisition workforce meets the requirements of OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 and manages the identification and development of the acquisition workforce, including determining staffing needs, training requirements, and other workforce development strategies. Additionally, the ACM submits an annual budget for acquisition workforce development to the CAO; provides input to the CAO and Chief Human Capital Officer regarding short and long term human capital strategic planning for training, competency fulfillment, career development, accession, recruitment and retention, and other facets of human capital management affecting the acquisition workforce; and recommends to the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) waivers, if any, to the education and training provisions of the OFPP Policy Letter.

### **Headquarters Office of Procurement, Analysis Division**

The organization responsible for establishing career development program policy for the procurement workforce in contracting and purchasing positions. This organization interfaces with OFPP, FAI, and the DAU on curriculum, policy, and career development matters. Final decisions regarding certification, fulfillment, and waivers are made within this office. The NASA ACM and Procurement Functional Advisor reside within the Analysis Division.

### **Agency Procurement Training Office**

The organization responsible for all administrative and operational activities of the career development program. This activity resides within the NASA Shared Services Center.

### **Center Procurement Training Coordinator**

The designated individual within a Center's procurement office, who is responsible for maintaining a copy of course completion certificates, records of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and continuous learning points earned, and determining whether individual mandatory core training courses and elective requirements are satisfied in accordance with this NASA-wide policy. The Center Procurement Training Coordinator shall maintain a copy of each FAC-C issued, along with a copy of the FAC-C Application and its attached documentation. A copy of any fulfillment requests and associated documentation shall also be maintained by the Center Procurement Training



Coordinator. The Center Procurement Training Coordinator serves as a liaison both between the Center and the NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement and between the Center and the Agency Procurement Training Office. Center Procurement Training Coordinators are responsible for maintaining a record of the core training completed by individuals at their Center.

#### Individual

Each individual is responsible for career progression and development and should complete an individual development plan annually. Supervisors should provide career guidance and opportunities for career growth, however; employees must actively take charge of planning their own careers. Individuals may pursue activities outside of the mandatory core courses and electives including: requests for additional on-the-job training assignments and/or increasingly difficult assignments, participation in a mentoring relationship, involvement in a professional association, enrollment in outside education beyond NASA's course offerings, and other job-related activities, such as, enrollment in courses to improve computer literacy, communication skills, and supervisory and leadership skills. Individuals should maintain training records, including completion certificates and ensure that the agency learning management system records and the government-wide Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) records are complete and current.

#### Supervisor

Each supervisor should be actively involved in employee training and development. They should provide career guidance and opportunities for career growth; help employees prepare individual development plans; approve training requests after coordination with the Center Procurement Training Coordinator to ensure that employees have completed any necessary prerequisite courses; promote the FAC-C Program to ensure that employees gain the necessary training, education and experience for certification at the appropriate level; and provide opportunities for employees to meet continuous learning requirements after certification. Additionally, supervisors are required to review and verify the documentation provided by the employee to support a FAC-C Application at any level. Supervisors are also required to review ACMIS records for employees and verify that the records are correct and complete.

#### **Program Eligibility**

NASA employees in the acquisition position functional categories of contracting and purchasing may apply for the mandatory core courses under the program. In addition, any employee who occupies a position, regardless of classification series, whose primary function is the acquisition of supplies and services (including construction) by and for the use of the Federal Government may apply for the mandatory core courses under this program.

Contracting duties include: developing, managing, supervising, or performing activities involving the procurement of supplies, services, construction, and research and development. These activities involve acquisition planning; cost and price analysis;

solicitation and selection of sources; preparation, negotiation, and award of contracts through sealed bidding or negotiation procedures; and all phases of contract administration, termination, and closeout. The positions require knowledge of the legislation, policies, regulations, and methods used in contracting; and knowledge of business and industry practices, sources of supply, evaluation factors, cost and price analysis techniques, and general requirements characteristics. Position titles include contract specialist, contracting officer, contract price/cost analyst, administrative contracting officer, contract termination specialist, contract termination officer, procurement analyst and procurement officer.

Purchasing duties include: purchasing, rental, or lease of supplies, services, and equipment through the simplified acquisition or commercial item process; the primary objective is the rapid delivery of goods and services in direct support of the requiring organization. Purchasing skills require knowledge of commercial supply sources and common business practices for pricing, discounts, deliveries, stocks, and shipments. For purchasing, the relevant job title is purchasing agent.

### **Program Quality Assurance**

Center implementation of the NASA Procurement Career Development and Training Program, including recordkeeping, will be examined during periodic Procurement Management Surveys. NASA's implementation of the FAC-C Program is subject to review by FAI.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Core Curriculum**

#### **Mandatory Core Courses**

The NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement sponsors a variety of procurement training courses targeted to different experience and grade levels. The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) mandatory core curriculum requirements for contracting were adopted as the government-wide standard under the FAC-C program. Mandatory core courses must be provided by DAU or be considered DAU equivalent. Course descriptions for mandatory core courses are found in Attachment 2, FAC-C Requirements for Education, Training and Experience.

Completion of NASA sponsored DAU courses or DAU equivalent courses are the preferred method to train NASA's GS-1102 and GS-1105 workforce and meet FAC-C Program requirements. Attendance at NASA sponsored training allows individuals to meet other NASA procurement personnel, share agency expertise, and discuss best practices and approaches.

#### **Alternate Training Methods**

While FAI offers a limited number of slots in mandatory core courses for civilian agency personnel, individuals should attend NASA-sponsored mandatory core courses whenever possible. Academic courses offered by civilian institutions of higher education

or contractor taught courses that are certified as DAU equivalent may be substituted for NASA sponsored courses. The DAU Education and Training Course Catalog (<http://www.dau.mil/catalog>) contains a list of currently required courses and their predecessor courses that count toward the FAC-C. Fulfillment, discussed on page 15, is another method available to meet mandatory training requirements.

### Electives

The curriculum is comprised of core training courses and electives. Each elective must be a minimum of 16 hours in length, should improve the qualifications of the procurement workforce and allow individuals to develop higher level skills and competencies. Electives are training opportunities, as agreed to by the individual's supervisor, either related to the individual's job, necessary for career development, or for cross training.

FAC-C elective requirements can be satisfied through a variety of methods. Electives may be courses which cover procurement initiatives or specific areas of procurement that require more in-depth coverage than is offered in the core courses. Electives may include college courses, on-line training, assignment-specific training (for example, Construction Contracting), or other training opportunities, such as procurement conferences, funded by the individual's organization.

The number of electives required for each certification level is found in Attachment 2, FAC-C Requirements for Education, Training and Experience. For a first time FAC-C Application, electives completed within a three year period before or after completion of the mandatory core courses at a particular level, may be used to support the FAC-C Application. Once certified, completed electives may be used to work toward the next higher certification level and toward continuous learning requirements.

### Documenting Course Completion

The Center Procurement Training Coordinator is responsible for maintaining a copy of each individual's completion certificates and helping ensure that course completion documentation is entered into the agency learning management system. Individuals are responsible for maintaining completion certificates and ensuring that course completion documentation is entered into the agency learning management system. Additionally, once NASA utilizes ACMIS, the government-wide procurement training database, individuals may be required to document course completion, including completion of continuous learning activities in this system.

### Program Certification Requirements

The FAC-C is a government-wide designation that replaces agency level certifications, including the NASA Certification Program for procurement personnel. A FAC-C is granted after an individual has successfully met mandatory education, training, and experience standards (see Attachment 2). There are three certification levels. The requirements are cumulative (i.e., individuals must meet the requirements of each previous certification level prior to completing the next higher level requirements).

NASA certification levels for procurement personnel are:

- Level I (Entry), Grades 5 through 7
- Level II (Intermediate), Grades 9 through 12
- Level III (Advanced), Grades 13 and above

The following Level I, II, and III descriptions serve as guidelines regarding expectations for procurement personnel at each level, within the parameters of the qualification standard.

#### Level I (Entry)

Entry level training is designed to establish fundamental qualifications and expertise in an individual's job series or career field. Development at the entry level establishes the foundation for career progression and is designed to prepare qualified and motivated personnel for positions of increasing responsibility.

Entry level employees are exposed to fundamental procurement procedures and the roles of various support functions such as accounting, property administration, quality assurance, etc. In addition to participation in education and training courses, it is beneficial to rotate new employees through structured assignments among a variety of functional offices.

#### Level II (Intermediate)

Functional specialization is emphasized at the intermediate level. Employees at this level should enhance their capabilities in a primary specialty or functional area, followed by lateral movement to a related specialty. While specialization is emphasized at the beginning of this level, toward the end of this level individuals should develop a broader background and a more general expertise in the overall procurement process.

#### Level III (Advanced)

Level III focuses on managing the acquisition process and learning the latest procurement methods and procedures. By the time an individual reaches the senior level of procurement, all the mandatory core training (or equivalent training) and electives must be completed. Additionally, individuals should advance through a career pattern that provides in-depth knowledge in particular functional areas and breadth of knowledge across the entire procurement process.

Advanced procurement training and education become imperative for a more global perspective. The lower level standards and courses form the basis for the next progressively higher levels of procurement career development. The requirements are cumulative.

#### FAC-C Application Process

The NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement makes the final determination that the established education, training and experience standards for a FAC-C level have been met and the Agency Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) grants the certification. The

FAC-C is issued by the SPE through the Agency Procurement Training Office. Once certified at a particular level, the FAC-C remains effective as long as the requirement for 80-continuous learning points every two years is satisfied. New requirements levied after certification do not affect the certification, unless legislative changes mandate revised training, education or experience requirements.

The FAC-C Application is initiated by individuals through their immediate supervisor. Each applicant is responsible for completing the FAC-C Application (see Attachment 3) and attaching a copy of the necessary documentation (see FAC-C Application instructions). The applicant's supervisor shall verify that all of the information in the FAC-C Application package is complete and correct before signing the FAC-C Application and submitting the package to the Center Procurement Training Coordinator. The Center Procurement Training Coordinator shall examine the package to ensure it is complete, maintain a copy of the FAC-C Application and its attachments and forward the FAC-C Application with the original signatures to the Agency Procurement Training Office.

The Agency Procurement Training Office will review the FAC-C Application, obtain any necessary corrections or supplemental information and either prepare the FAC-C or recommend that the FAC-C not be granted. The Agency Procurement Training Office will forward the original FAC-C Application to the Procurement Functional Advisor. In either situation, the NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement will make the final determination whether to grant the FAC-C. The Agency Procurement Training Office will forward any approved FAC-C to the Center Procurement Training Coordinator who will make a copy of the FAC-C before forwarding it to the applicant's supervisor for presentation to the individual. If a FAC-C will not be granted, the Agency Procurement Training Office will forward a written explanation to the Center Procurement Training Coordinator and the applicant's supervisor to specify which FAC-C requirements have not been met.

Center Procurement Training Coordinators shall maintain a complete copy of all FAC-C Applications, including attachments and a copy of each FAC-C issued. For individuals who leave Center employment, FAC-C Application packages and FAC-C copies shall be maintained by the Procurement Training Coordinator in a separate archive file.

Individuals who receive a FAC-C are required to update the government-wide database to indicate their current certification level and obtain their supervisor's review of the updated information.

#### *Comparability of FAC-C and NASA Certification Programs*

FAC-C designations are recognized on a government-wide basis. However, the requirements of the FAC-C Program do not completely correlate to the requirements of the NASA's certification program, effective prior to January 1, 2007. There are statutory and regulatory differences, particularly in terminology, training and continuous learning requirements.

NASA procurement personnel, previously certified under the NASA Acquisition Career Development Training Program should apply for a FAC-C. In March 2007, FAI reviewed NASA's certification program, effective prior to January 2007, and found NASA certifications could be converted to a FAC-C once certain conditions are met. To be eligible for conversion of a NASA certification to a FAC-C, NASA personnel must meet the mandatory education, training (including completion of electives) and experience standards.

To apply for a FAC-C, a completed FAC-C Application, a copy of the NASA certification, a listing of continuous learning and documentation of the continuous learning must be submitted to the applicant's supervisor. The applicant's supervisor shall verify that all of the information in the FAC-C Application package is complete and correct before signing the FAC-C Application and submitting the package to the Center Procurement Training Coordinator. The Center Procurement Training Coordinator shall examine the FAC-C Application package to ensure it is complete, maintain a copy of the FAC-C Application and its attachments and forward the FAC-C Application with the original signatures to the Agency Procurement Training Office for processing.

#### *Equivalency of FAC-C and DOD Certification*

As stated in the OMB Memorandum, dated January 20, 2006, the FAC-C Program is intended to mirror the certification requirements that the Department of Defense established as a result of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). Furthermore, a valid and current DAWIA certification in contracting is equivalent to the FAC-C at the same certification level.

NASA procurement personnel that hold a DAWIA certification should apply for a FAC-C. To ensure that the DAWIA certification is current, the individual must demonstrate that the requirement for earning continuous learning points has been met. To apply for a FAC-C, a completed FAC-C Application, a copy of the DAWIA certification, a listing of continuous learning and documentation of the continuous learning must be submitted to the applicant's supervisor. The applicant's supervisor shall verify that all of the information in the FAC-C Application package is complete and correct before signing the FAC-C Application and submitting the package to the Center Procurement Training Coordinator. The Center Procurement Training Coordinator shall examine the FAC-C Application package to ensure it is complete, maintain a copy of the FAC-C Application and its attachments and forward the FAC-C Application with the original signatures to the Agency Procurement Training Office for processing.

#### **Contracting Officer Warrants**

The FAC-C is not mandatory for all GS-1102s. However, any members of the workforce issued new Contracting Officer warrants on or after January 1, 2007, regardless of GS series or warrant authority, must be FAC-C certified at the appropriate level to support their warrant obligations. A new contracting officer warrant is defined as any warrant, regardless of the warrant authority, issued to an individual for the first time at a NASA Center. This requirement does not apply to senior level officials responsible for delegating procurement authority or those whose warrants are generally used to procure emergency goods and services.

### Certification levels for Contracting Officer Warrants:

<u>Certification Level</u>	<u>Warrant Authority</u>
Level I	0 to \$1M commercial (FAR Part 12); 0 to \$100K noncommercial;
Level II	0 to \$10M commercial (FAR Part 12); 0 to \$10M noncommercial;
Level III	Unlimited for incremental funding modifications Unlimited

This policy applies to new warrants issued on or after January 1, 2007. All warrants issued are subject to Center work instructions and the discretion of the Procurement Officer and/or HQ review approvals as appropriate. Requests for warrant authorities that exceed the subject thresholds shall be submitted in writing to the ACM or Procurement Functional Advisor for review and subsequent approval by the Senior Procurement Executive. The request must include a complete listing of the individual's training, education and procurement experience, and contain compelling rationale to justify issuance of a warrant that exceeds the listed threshold. The supporting documentation must demonstrate that the individual has developed strong analytical and decision making capabilities, has qualifying experience and excellent job performance. Individuals who receive warrant authority in excess of their certification level are required to obtain certification at the appropriate level within two years of issuance of the warrant; otherwise, the warrant authority shall be revoked by the Center Procurement Officer. By January 31 of each year, the Center Procurement Training Coordinators will provide an update of the status of any individuals who have not yet achieved the appropriate certification level to match their warrant authority to the Procurement Functional Advisor.

### **Fulfillment**

Credit for a mandatory core training course may be granted when a determination is made that an individual has already acquired, through experience or other courses, the necessary knowledge provided by the mandatory course. If such a determination is made by the NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement, completion of the course is not necessary. Fulfillment determinations are made under circumstances where an individual's current career level is higher than the level for which the training is mandatory. Completion by fulfillment does not apply to individuals in career ladder positions who have not completed mandatory courses at their current career level. Additionally, fulfillment may not be used for individuals whose performance is less than satisfactory or who are under performance improvement plans.

Each core course covers certain competency standards. To achieve fulfillment for a core course, individuals must document the manner in which they mastered these competencies (through on-the-job experience, training, etc.). The FAI website contains a complete listing of the competency standards for each core course at:

<http://www.dau.mil/learning/DAUFulfillmentPgm.aspx>.

### **Fulfillment Procedure**

If the supervisor and individual believe that attendance at a mandatory course is unnecessary, they must prepare a Fulfillment of Mandatory Training Requirement request (see Attachment 4) and provide the completed competency standards documentation to the Center Procurement Training Coordinator. The Procurement Training Coordinator shall examine the fulfillment package to ensure it is complete, maintain a copy of the request and completed competency standards documentation and forward the complete package to the Agency Procurement Training Office. The Agency Procurement Training Office will review the fulfillment package, obtain any necessary corrections or supplemental information to it and forward it to the Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), along with a recommendation to approve or disapprove fulfillment. The ACM will make the final determination whether or not to approve the fulfillment request. The ACM will sign the Fulfillment of Mandatory Training Requirement and retain a copy of it before forwarding it to the Agency Procurement Training Office for disposition.

The Agency Procurement Training Office will notify the Center Procurement Training Coordinator of the results of the request, and provide the individual who requested the fulfillment, the Fulfillment of Mandatory Training Requirement, signed by the ACM. Center Procurement Training Coordinators shall maintain a copy of fulfillment request packages, where fulfillment has been granted. For individuals who leave Center employment, these packages shall be maintained in a separate archive file.

### **Career Paths**

Procurement personnel may utilize both vertical and lateral movement as options for career progression. Lateral movement within and between career fields is highly encouraged, primarily at the intermediate level, to broaden the experience base of the employee. This may be accomplished through optional rotational assignments. It is incumbent upon the individual employee to manage career development by keeping abreast of training requirements and seeking opportunities for enhanced career development whenever possible. Individuals should maintain training records, including completion certificates, and ensure that electronic records of training completion are current.

Multi-specialty experience is desirable and is particularly important for those who seek senior level or other key procurement positions. To obtain this experience, employees should strive to obtain work assignments and training in more than one of the functional areas of procurement. Center Procurement Offices are encouraged to provide multi-specialty experience through structured programs.

In addition to multi-specialty experience, a mixture of operational and staff experience will strengthen an individual's competitive position when seeking senior level positions in procurement career fields.

Career paths for personnel in each procurement career field are shown in Attachment 5, Career Paths and Critical Skills. They are identified in terms of the education, training,



and experience necessary for career progression to the most senior procurement positions. The career paths are established to guide planning for individual career development activities. Under critical skills, there is some overlap between the levels.

### **Individual Development Plan**

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a valuable tool for the career development program and should be completed annually for each employee in a procurement position. This document is prepared by the employee with the active involvement of the supervisor. The plan must be signed by the employee, the immediate supervisor and the next higher level supervisor. The IDP should address:

- ❑ Near term (1 year) and long term (5 year) career goals and objectives;
- ❑ On-the-job training, rotational and detail assignments, as appropriate;
- ❑ Mandatory scheduled core courses, electives, and other training opportunities;
- ❑ Other professional development and mentoring assignments, if applicable; and
- ❑ Continuous learning.

The IDP should be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect completed training, work assignments and changing needs of the employee. Involvement in other developmental activities should be noted. The review may occur in conjunction with the mid-term review of the employee's Performance Plan.

### **Additional Developmental Activities**

#### **Rotational Assignments**

Rotational assignments are a vital tool for career development. Valuable experience is gained by working in more than one organizational unit on a variety of assignments within the Center's procurement organization, as well as within other functional organizations at the Center. These cross-functional assignments provide training and develop skills in other disciplines that, in turn, foster a better understanding of these areas and builds team relationships within the acquisition community. The Center procurement organization and other Center organizations may create professional development opportunities without expending additional funds. The Center Procurement Officer is the approving official for all rotational assignments and may re-delegate the authority one level down without possibility of further delegation.

#### **Mentoring**

The Center procurement organization is encouraged to sponsor a voluntary mentoring program or recommend participation in a Center mentoring program, as part of the career development path. Participation in a mentoring program provides many benefits to both the mentor and the individual being mentored. Mentoring programs, outside the normal employee/supervisor relationship provide the mentor with an opportunity to share valuable information from personal professional experiences with the individual being mentored and enable the mentor to develop or practice valuable skills, such as coaching, feedback and active listening.

An agreement between the individual and the mentor serves as guidance for the mentoring relationship. It covers topics like individual career planning, understanding and navigating the organization, developing acquisition skills and mastering contracting competencies. The mentor should have a sufficient level of career progression and experience to be able to provide coaching and feedback on career choices, and development of acquisition skill proficiency.

#### **Professional Association Involvement**

Membership in professional associations although encouraged, is strictly voluntary. This membership is valuable for a variety of reasons. It provides opportunities for cross fertilization of information and ideas on a variety of issues. Information is available through these associations that allow the professional to keep abreast of current topics. New and updated acquisition topics are presented in publications, meetings and seminars. The meetings provide members an opportunity to interact with others who have similar professional and career interests. Finally, involvement in association activities provides networking opportunities.

#### **Training Funding and Location**

When sponsored by NASA, mandatory core courses and associated travel is Headquarters funded, through the Agency Procurement Training Office. The Centers are responsible for funding repeat courses when attendees fail to successfully complete a course. Centers are responsible for any costs associated with elective courses held on-site at the respective Center or at other locations.

The core courses will be conducted at NASA selected sites.

#### **Training Selection, Prioritization and Attendance**

The Centers will provide a list of nominees for the core courses offered prior to the beginning of each fiscal year to the Agency Procurement Training Office. This information is used to establish a schedule of courses and allocate slots according to the Centers' needs. However, if a Center does not provide names as requested, the Agency Procurement Training Office may utilize its agency training database to identify nominees from the various Centers to attend the courses and provide this information to the Center Procurement Officer.

The following priorities will be exercised when the number of requests to attend a course exceeds the number of available slots: (i) the course is a mandatory requirement for an employee in a particular position; (ii) the course is required to apply for the next higher certification level and the employee has achieved certification at the current level (iii) the employee has completed all mandatory training requirements for the current level, but has not yet received certification at that level; (iv) the course is identified as optional training for employees (e.g., individuals outside of the 1102 series career field).

If a participant is unable to attend a scheduled training class, the Center Procurement Training Coordinator is responsible for providing another nominee to the Agency Procurement Training Office for consideration.

### **Continuous Learning Points (CLPs)**

Once individuals are certified, they are required to earn 80 CLPs every two years, to maintain certification. CLPs can be acquired through training, education, experience, or professional activities. CLPs are earned for activities that include, but are not limited to, agency-sponsored training, management/executive seminars, special job and/or professional association related projects, participation in seminars/workshops, other appropriate developmental activities, and brown-bag sessions on work-related topics. CLPS are also earned for giving a presentation on a work-related topic, speaking at a conference or seminar, or participating as a member of a NASA-sponsored Procurement Management Survey.

Continuous learning is not limited to procurement-related topics. However, topics must be related to skills necessary for the performance or enhancement of a person's ability to perform a current job, or a future position. Relevant topics include: finance, accounting, management training, leadership, interpersonal skills building, resource management, information technology applications, ethics, and law. Generally, CLPs are earned in smaller increments, such as 1 CLP for a lunch-time seminar, or 8 CLPS for a one-day leadership seminar.

Supervisors should ensure that individuals have the opportunity to earn CLPs and help document their completion. Individuals are responsible for maintaining records to document CLPs and ensuring that a record of completion is entered into the agency learning management system. Additionally, once NASA utilizes ACMIS, individuals may be required to document CLPs in the ACMIS system. For additional guidance about CLPs, see: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/acq\\_wk/fac\\_contracting\\_program.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/acq_wk/fac_contracting_program.pdf) - Appendix B.

The Center Procurement Training Coordinators will track CLPs earned by Center personnel and notify individuals and their supervisors a minimum of six months in advance of before the 80 CLPs need to be accumulated. By not later than July 31 and January 31 of each year, the Center Procurement Training Coordinators shall provide the Agency Procurement Training Office with a list of individuals who have not met the requirement to earn 80 CLPs to maintain a current FAC-C during the previous six months.

### **Waivers**

It is NASA policy not to grant waivers to education, training, and experience requirements. However, in rare circumstances the SPE may grant a waiver if it is clearly in the best interest of the agency. The SPE's authority to grant a waiver may not be delegated and the waiver must be in writing.

Before a waiver is documented or requested, contact the ACM or the Procurement Functional Advisor to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for the Senior Procurement Executive to consider a waiver. Individual waiver requests should be submitted to the Procurement Functional Advisor. The request must include a complete listing of the individual's education, training and procurement experience, and contain compelling rationale that fully justifies why a waiver should be granted.

If a waiver is approved by the Agency SPE, it is valid for a two-year period from the date the waiver was approved. During the two-year period, the waiver recipient is required to obtain certification at the appropriate level. The waiver is not transferable to another agency.

## Qualification Standard GS-1102: Contract Specialist

### ***Basic Requirements for GS-5 through GS-12***

A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field;

**OR**

At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

The following table shows the amounts of education and/or experience required to qualify for positions GS-7 through GS-12 covered by this standard.

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b><u>OR</u> SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE</b>
<b>GS-7</b>	1 full academic year of graduate education or law school or superior academic achievement	1 year equivalent to at least GS-5
<b>GS-9</b>	2 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education or masters or equivalent graduate degree or LL.B. or J.D.	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7
<b>GS-11</b>	3 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
<b>GS-12 and above</b>	(No educational equivalent)	1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level
<b>Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels for which both education and experience are acceptable.</b>		

Graduate Education. To qualify for GS-1102 positions on the basis of graduate education, graduate education in one or a combination of the following fields is required: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Note - For positions at GS-7 through GS-12, applicants who are qualifying based on experience must possess at least one year of specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level that provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position, in addition to meeting the basic requirements in the paragraphs above.

Exceptions: Employees in GS-1102 positions meet the qualification standard for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. Employees who currently occupy GS-1102 positions at grades 5 through 12 meet the basic requirements for other GS-1102 positions up to and including those classified at GS-12. This includes positions at other agencies and promotions up through grade 12. However, employees must meet the specialized experience requirements when seeking another position.

***Basic Requirements for GS-13 and Above***

Completion of all mandatory training prescribed by the Head of the Agency for progression to GS-13 or higher level contracting positions, including at least 4-years experience in contracting or related positions. At least 1 year of that experience must be specialized experience or equivalent to work at the next lower level of the position, and must have provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position.

**AND**

A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree, that included or was supplemented by at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Exceptions: Employees in GS-1102 positions met the qualifications standard for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. This also applies to positions at the same grade in the same agency or other agencies if the specialized experience requirements are met. However, employee must meet the basic requirements and specialized experience requirements to qualify for promotion to a higher grade, unless granted a waiver.

## **FAC-C Requirements for Education, Training, and Experience**

### **Level I**

#### ***Education requirement***

Baccalaureate degree OR at least 24 semester hours within the following disciplines: accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

#### ***Experience requirement***

Minimum of 1 year of contracting experience

Employees beginning a Level I certification program must take CON 100

#### ***Training requirements***

#### **CON 100 Shaping Smart Business Arrangements**

**Description:** Personnel new to the Contracting career field will gain a comprehensive understanding of the environment in which they will serve. Students will develop professional skills for making business decisions and for advising other acquisition team members in successfully meeting customers' needs. Before beginning their study of technical knowledge and contracting procedures, students will learn about the NASA mission and the role of the procurement organization. Knowledge management and information systems will be introduced as well. Small group exercises will prepare the students to provide contracting support within the overarching business relationships of government and industry.

**Length:** 5 class days

**Prerequisite:** None

#### **CON 110 Mission Support Planning**

**Description:** This course will introduce new contracting personnel to their role as a business advisor in the acquisition process. It focuses on the students' role in understanding their customers' mission and in developing an ability to plan successful mission support strategies based on their knowledge of the contracting environment and their customers' needs. Students will learn how to use the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS), conduct effective market research, develop alternative acquisition strategies, and understand how socioeconomic programs support the acquisition planning process.

**Length:** This is a self-paced course available through the Internet. Students must pass the final examination within 60 calendar days of the start date. The course consists of 8 lessons that could be completed in approximately 40 hours.

**Prerequisite:** None, but completion of CON 100 first is desirable

### CON 111 Mission Strategy Execution

**Description:** Mission Planning Execution is the second of three online Level I Contracting courses. It focuses on executing the acquisition planning through soliciting industry and awarding a contract. It provides students with the knowledge necessary to execute an acquisition that optimizes customer mission performance. Students will learn the techniques and benefits of early industry involvement in shaping requirements, basic procedures for acquisition of both commercial and noncommercial requirements, and how to effectively conduct price analysis and determine when a price is fair and reasonable. Finally, students will learn how to conduct basic competitive acquisitions, process awards, and handle protests before and after contract award.

**Length:** This is a self-paced course available through the Internet. Students must pass the final examination within 60 calendar days of the start date. The course consists of 8 lessons, which could be completed in approximately 40 hours.

**Prerequisite:** CON 110

### CON 112 Mission Performance Assessment

**Description:** Mission Performance Assessment is the final of three online courses. This course builds on the foundation established in CON 110 and CON 111 and provides students with the knowledge necessary to identify and utilize appropriate performance metrics when evaluating contractor performance. Students will explore processes for working with their customer to ensure contract performance is meeting mission requirements. Students will explore assessment strategies and performance remedies and how to make and price contract changes after award, handle disputes, and close out completed contracts.

**Length:** This is a self-paced course available through the Internet. Students must pass the final examination within 60 calendar days of the start date. The course consists of 6 lessons, which could be completed in approximately 20 hours.

**Prerequisite:** CON 111

### CON 120 Mission Focused Contracting

**Description:** Mission Focused Contracting is the capstone course for Level I Contracting students. This course engages the students in the entire acquisition process from meeting with the customer to completing the contract closeout process. Students will have an opportunity to learn and apply leadership, problem-solving, and negotiation skills. Using an integrated case study approach, students will apply the knowledge and skills gained in the previous Level I contracting courses.

**Length:** 10 class days

**Prerequisite:** CON 100 & CON 112



## 1 Elective

### **Level II**

#### ***Education requirement***

Baccalaureate degree OR at least 24 semester hours within the following disciplines: accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

#### ***Experience requirement***

Minimum of 2 years of contracting experience

#### ***Training requirements***

#### CON 202 Intermediate Contracting\*

**Description:** Intermediate Contracting presents experienced, intermediate-level contracting personnel with an intensive examination of the life cycle phases of contracting, including the pre-award phase of contracting (acquisition planning, solicitation, evaluation and award), and post-award contract administration, plus contracting problem analysis and resolution. Case studies, along with group and individual exercises, expose students to contracting problems, and challenge students to apply ethical principles, statutes, regulations, and sound business judgment toward the resolution of contracting problems. Major course topics include acquisition planning, contracting methods with an emphasis on formal source selection and noncommercial acquisitions, and contract administration including contract surveillance and quality assurance, financial management, terminations, and disputes resolution.

**Length:** 10 Class Days

#### CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing\*

**Description:** Intermediate Contract Pricing both reinforces pricing skills taught in CON 104 and develops skills in price analysis, advanced pre-award pricing decisions, post-award pricing decisions (modifications) and general contract pricing issues. The Course Terminal Objective is for students to recognize pricing issues and develop pre-negotiation objectives so that a fair and reasonable price position is supported in contract actions. The course is designed as a Group work focused, interactive student-to-student learning environment. Application of course material is developed through four scenarios covering supplies, services, systems and construction. Quantitative skills are interwoven with contracting topics and applied in these typical acquisition situations. Each group develops a portion of a scenario and leads the class in discussing the relevant pricing issues. Students are encouraged to share their experience and expertise in their group effort, and to help others develop these skills.

**Length:** 10 Class Days

### CON 210 Government Contract Law\*

**Description:** Government Contract Law provides an understanding of the impact of Government Contract Law on daily decision-making in acquisition. It introduces basic legal principles and sources of contract law as they apply to the Government's acquisition of supplies and services, as well as construction services. Court cases and administrative decisions (General Accounting Office, Boards of Contract Appeals) are discussed with emphasis on how the law affects the Government/contractor interface and how to avoid legal disputes and maintain ethical business relationships.

**Length:** 5 Class Days

**\*Note -** The above courses will be replaced by a new set of Level II courses listed below. The new courses are not yet available for procurement personnel at civilian agencies. Until the full slate of new Level II courses is made available, NASA will offer the CON 202, 204 and 210 courses.

### CON 214 Business Decisions for Contracting

**Description:** Business Decisions for Contracting builds on the Level I pre-award business and contracting knowledge necessary to process complex procurements. The emphasis of this course is on planning successful mission-support strategies and executing an acquisition that optimizes customer mission performance. Students will learn the techniques for building successful business relationships, the benefits of strategic sourcing and spend analysis, and the ins and outs of providing contract financing. Also, students will take an in-depth look at subcontracting, how to conduct a formal source selection, and how to analyze the information necessary to determine contractor responsibility.

**Length:** This is a self-paced course available through the Internet. Students must pass the final examination within 60 calendar days of the start date. The course consists of 9 lessons, which could be completed in approximately 40 hours.

**Prerequisite:** CON 120

### CON 215 Intermediate Contracting for Mission Support

**Description:** This is a case study wherein students apply the knowledge and skills learned in the Level I Contracting courses and CON 214. Students demonstrate their ability to develop and execute business strategies to meet customer requirements. This case helps to develop critical thinking, customer needs analysis, procurement strategy development, and source selection skills necessary for successful contract performance.

**Pre-course Assignments:** The class will begin using a virtual classroom 2 weeks prior to the start date. The virtual classroom will be used for developing groups and pre-course reading.

**Length:** 2-week online virtual classroom precedes 8 class days

**Prerequisite:** CON 214

### CON 216 Legal Considerations in Contracting

**Description:** This course focuses on legal considerations in the procurement process. The course introduces the basic principles and sources of law relevant to procurement, including fiscal law. It also addresses various other legal issues that may develop during the course of a contract such as protests, assignment of claims, disputes, fraud, contractor debt, performance issues, and contract termination.

**Length:** This is a self-paced course available through the Internet. The course consists of 11 lessons, which could be completed in approximately 40 hours. Students must pass the final examination within 60 calendar days of the start date.

**Prerequisite:** CON 120

### CON 217 Cost Analysis and Negotiation Techniques

**Description:** Cost Analysis and Negotiation Techniques builds on the basic pricing skills covered in the Level I Contracting curriculum and introduces methods and techniques necessary to analyze a contractor's cost proposal and to develop a government negotiation objective. The course also introduces negotiation terminology, styles, and techniques.

**Length:** This is a self-paced course available through the Internet. Students must pass the final examination within 60 calendar days of the start date. The course consists of 13 lessons, which could be completed in approximately 40 hours.

**Prerequisite:** CON 120

### CON 218 Advanced Contracting for Mission Support

**Description:** This course is a case study wherein students apply the knowledge and skills learned in the Levels I and II courses. Students demonstrate their ability to negotiate fair and reasonable prices and to consider the legal implications for various contract situations. This case study helps to develop critical thinking, cost analysis, negotiation, and contract administration skills necessary for successful contract performance.

**Pre-course Assignments:** The class will begin using a virtual classroom 2 weeks prior to the start date. The virtual classroom will be used for developing groups and pre-course reading.

**Length:** 2-week online virtual classroom precedes 9½ class days

**Prerequisite:** CON 215, CON 216, & CON 217

## 2 Electives

### **Level III**

#### ***Education requirements***

Baccalaureate degree AND at least 24 semester hours within the following disciplines: accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

#### ***Experience requirement***

Minimum of 4 years of contracting experience

#### ***Training requirements***

### CON 353 Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support

**Description:** Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support is the Level III Contracting certification course. Through realistic scenario-based learning, students work in teams to practice developing sound business solutions as a valued strategic and expert business advisor. Student course work is designed to contribute solutions to senior leadership and local supervisors and to provide resources for the Contracting career field via the course community of practice.

**Pre-course Assignments:** Students must complete all online assignments prior to attending this course. These online assignments represent 25 percent of the student's grade. Details will be provided to students 30 days prior to the class start date.

**Length:** 9½ class days

**Prerequisite:** Completion of Level II Core Training Courses or NASA Level II Certification

## 2 Electives

**Note -** The previously offered CON 333 (Management for Contracting Executives) may be substituted for CON 353 for purposes of the FAC-C; CON 301 (Executive Contracting) can not be substituted for CON 353.

## **Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Application**

The FAC-C Contracting Application is online as an excel spreadsheet.

You must read the instructions prior to filling out the application.

Once in the application, you may type in your responses, use the check boxes provided, save the application on your computer, and print out a final version.

The link to filling out the application is:

<http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/training/faccapp.html>.

<b>FULFILLMENT OF MANDATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENT</b>			
<p>The information provided herein and on the attached competency standards is used for verification by the individual's supervisor and the Agency Procurement Training Office to ensure that mandatory acquisition training requirements have been fulfilled. See <a href="http://www.dau.mil/learning/DAUFulfillmentPgm.aspx">http://www.dau.mil/learning/DAUFulfillmentPgm.aspx</a> for a list of competency standards for each course. The individual must document the manner in which each competency standard was mastered and attach the documentation to this fulfillment request.</p>			
<b>SECTION I – INDIVIDUAL REQUEST</b>			
NAME ( <i>Last, First, Middle Initial</i> )		COURSE NUMBER	
COURSE TITLE		COURSE LEVEL ( <i>Entry, Intermediate, Senior</i> )	
<b>STATEMENT</b> I propose that the skills and knowledge of the mandatory course identified above have been obtained by experience, education, or alternate training, or a combination thereof. I request that this be considered fulfillment of the mandatory training requirement indicated.			
SIGNATURE		DATE SIGNED	
TITLE		SERIES/ GRADE	
AGENCY	CURRENT LEVEL ( <i>Entry, Intermediate, Advanced.</i> )	DATE ENTERED CURRENT LEVEL ( <i>YY/MM/DD</i> )	
<b>SECTION II – SUPERVISOR RECOMMENDATION</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> CONCUR INDIVIDUAL HAS GAINED REQUISITE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AS PROPOSED IN SECTION I.		<input type="checkbox"/> DO NOT CONCUR ( <i>Return Request to Individual</i> )	
SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE		DATE SIGNED (YY/MM/DD)	
TITLE	INTERNAL OFFICE	LOCATION	
<b>SECTION III – DISPOSITION</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED		<input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVED	
SIGNATURE OF ACQUISITION CAREER MANAGER		DATE SIGNED	
TITLE	AGENCY	LOCATION	

## Career Paths and Critical Skills

### LEVEL I CAREER PATH CONTRACTING - GS-1102

Typical Grade:

- GS-5 through GS-7

Typical Position Titles:

- Contract Specialist, Contract Administrator, Contract Cost and/or Price Analyst

Experience: **Mandatory**:

- One year of contracting experience for entry at the GS-7 grade level.

Education: **Mandatory**:

- a 4 year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field,  
**OR**
- at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Training: **Mandatory**:

- Completion of the Level I core courses and one elective.

### LEVEL I CRITICAL SKILLS

#### **GS 5 through 7**

- Analyze procurement requests (PR) packages for completeness and conformity with Federal, NASA and installation procurement regulations and procedures.
- Coordinate PR package revisions with the initiating offices and obtain any missing information.
- Determine adequacy and completeness of requirements description, which may involve research of various manuals and catalogs, or discussions with manufacturer's representatives or requisitioning organization to identify and initiate any necessary corrective actions.
- Identify possible sources for the acquisition and coordinate market research for both competitive and non-competitive procurements.
- Prepare necessary justifications for negotiated procurements.
- Develop procurement strategies by reviewing previous history, market conditions, and specifications or technical data packages and determine appropriate method of procurement.
- Publicize the procurement action.
- Prepare solicitation documents such as Request for Quotations (RFQs) and Request for Proposals (RFPs), ensuring that all applicable clauses are included.
- Obtain the required document coordination and approval, and issue the RFP to industry via the appropriate portal.

- ❑ Evaluate offers for compliance with terms and conditions and applicable clauses.
- ❑ Evaluate offers for responsiveness, conduct price analyses, obtain technical coordination where required, determine responsibility of contractors and make recommendation for award of contracts after due consideration of all factors involved.
- ❑ Participate in negotiations with offerors based on proposals received; coordinate price analyses; prepare summary of negotiations describing the events and occurrences leading to ultimate and mutual agreement on technical, financial, and overall contractual terms; and make recommendations for award of contracts.
- ❑ Ensure proper preparation of contract award documents obtain all required reviews, approvals, and signatures.
- ❑ Perform contract administration and closeout.



## Career Paths and Critical Skills

### LEVEL II CAREER PATH CONTRACTING - GS-1102

#### Typical Grade:

- ❑ GS-9 through 12
- ❑ Individuals are expected to have earned a FAC-C Level I before promotion to a GS-9 (or a GS-11 position, if hired as a GS-9).

#### Typical Position Titles:

- ❑ Contract Specialist, Contract Administrator, Contract Cost and/or Price Analyst, Contracting Officer or Procurement Analyst

#### Experience: **Mandatory**:

- ❑ Two years of contracting experience.

#### Education: **Mandatory**:

- ❑ a 4 year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field, **OR**
- ❑ at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

#### Training: **Mandatory**:

- ❑ Completion of Level II core courses and two electives.

### LEVEL II CRITICAL SKILLS

#### **GS 9 through 12**

- ❑ Counsel customers on their acquisition related roles and participate in advance procurement planning.
- ❑ Review and provide business advice for the preparation of PR packages.
- ❑ Ensure that adequate market research is conducted and documented.
- ❑ Draft acquisition plans or prepare for and participate in procurement strategy meetings.
- ❑ Determine the appropriate procurement method, contract type (including all cost-reimbursement and fixed-price) and pricing arrangement.
- ❑ Consider socioeconomic set-asides to small businesses, eligible 8(a) concerns, etc.
- ❑ Coordinate the development of evaluation factors and subfactors.
- ❑ Draft proposal or bid preparation instructions.
- ❑ Prepare solicitation, tailored to the acquisition, to include all applicable Federal and NASA clauses and requirements.
- ❑ Conduct pre-solicitation, pre-bid or pre-proposal conferences.
- ❑ Receive bids and proposals and take the necessary actions to protect sensitive information.
- ❑ Coordinate the evaluation of bids or proposals and fully participate in the evaluation process.

- ❑ Perform analyses of cost proposals and obtain pricing support as needed from others, including Government auditors.
- ❑ Conduct and document oral or written discussions and competitive range determinations.
- ❑ Ensure that the evaluation process, evaluation findings and source selection decision are adequately documented.
- ❑ Identify procedural as well as documentation deficiencies and irregularities, and, with the concurrence of legal counsel, continue or discontinue the proposed procurement and/or initiate alternate procurement strategies.
- ❑ Perform and document structured fee analysis, when necessary.
- ❑ Research and document the status of the contractor's business systems and cost accounting disclosure statements.
- ❑ Determine negotiation issues; develop strategies and negotiation positions. Prepare pre-negotiation position memoranda and cost/price analysis spreadsheets.
- ❑ Conduct negotiations, make necessary trade-offs to achieve a fair and reasonable price and resolve all negotiation issues and concerns.
- ❑ Draft negotiation summaries, prepare final award documents, and route contract for review and approval, as necessary.
- ❑ Perform all actions required to effectively administer assigned contracts.
- ❑ Oversee the activities of the cognizant NASA Technical Representatives, analyze contractor performance, cost, property and other reports, resolve claims and disputes, and approve contractor requested overtime, travel, and equipment purchases.
- ❑ Address performance issues; take remedial action, such as drafting show cause letters or cure notices.
- ❑ Perform actions necessary to partially or completely terminate contracts, both for the convenience of the Government and for default, as appropriate.
- ❑ Prepare all necessary documentation for contract changes and perform all analyses and negotiations required for the same.
- ❑ Perform steps necessary for close-out of individual contracts.
- ❑ Analyze reports, final vouchers, audits and releases, negotiating indirect cost rates, and make property title, transfer, and disposition determinations.
- ❑ Ensure that timely and accurate procurement data is entered and validated in all appropriate systems for all assigned actions.

### LEVEL III CAREER PATH CONTRACTING - GS-1102

Typical Grade:

- ❑ GS-13 and above
- ❑ A FAC-C Level II is required before promotion to a GS-13 contracting position.
- ❑ A FAC-C Level III is required before promotion to a GS-14 or higher level contracting position.

Typical Position Title:

- ❑ Contract Specialist, Supervisory Contracting Officer, Procurement Analyst

Experience: **Mandatory:**

- ❑ Four years of contracting experience or related positions
- ❑ At least 1 year of experience must be specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level of the position
- ❑ The experience must provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position

Education: **Mandatory:**

- ❑ A 4 year course of study leading to a bachelors degree, including or supplemented by at least 24 hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management;

Training: **Mandatory:**

- ❑ Completion of Level III core courses and two electives

### LEVEL III CRITICAL SKILLS

#### **GS 13 and Above**

- ❑ Coordinate and lead acquisition planning efforts.
- ❑ Conduct analyses of requirements, to identify pertinent pre-solicitation, solicitation and contract award issues and potential contract administration issues.
- ❑ Advise senior level program or project office personnel on the submission of procurement related documents, including specifications and statements of work, in-house cost estimates, work breakdown structures, data requirement documents, acquisition plans, and source lists.
- ❑ Coordinate and actively participate in any necessary re-writing of procurement related documents.
- ❑ Review proposed non-competitive procurements to determine validity of source selection and either recommend conversion to competitive procurement or initiate action to ensure that acceptable and accurate JOFOC is prepared, coordinated and approved.
- ❑ Develop individual procurement strategies and the acquisition plan.
- ❑ Determine the appropriate acquisition method, contract type, and contractor performance incentives, as appropriate.

- ❑ Develop Procurement Strategy Meeting (PSM) charts and present PSM topics, as needed.
- ❑ Publicize and create the Request for Proposals or Request for Information and prepare all associated file documentation.
- ❑ Conduct industry briefings, site visits and pre-proposal conferences; respond to inquiries relating to acquisitions.
- ❑ Conduct comprehensive evaluations of all business aspects of offerors, oversee mission suitability (technical) evaluations, recommend determinations regarding competitive range and offer non-responsiveness, conduct pre-award surveys and conduct discussions with offerors within the competitive range.
- ❑ Provide results of the proposal evaluations to source selection officials and recommend contractor selection.
- ❑ Participate in the debriefing of unsuccessful offerors.
- ❑ Prepare all procurement documentation relating to bid protests.
- ❑ Serve as lead negotiator. Plan the negotiation strategy, coordinate that strategy with the negotiation team and lead negotiations with the contractor.
- ❑ Make all trade-offs necessary to achieve fair and reasonable prices; prepare all pre-negotiation position memoranda, post-negotiation summaries and contractual documents necessary for award.
- ❑ Perform contract administration functions.
- ❑ Oversee all contract administration activities by Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives, Government agency personnel delegated contract administration functions, contractors and others involved in the administration process.
- ❑ Allow or disallow incurred costs; determine claims, withhold liquidated damage amounts; resolve performance problems and disputes; approve contractor requests for property, travel; negotiate changes, review and approve subcontracting plans, terminations for default and convenience and other modifications; analyze performance, financial, property and other reports; and perform all other post-award functions necessary to ensure proper contractor performance.
- ❑ Train entry level procurement personnel and program office personnel involved in generating requirements.
- ❑ Resolve organizational conflicts of interest, answer Congressional inquiries, represent the procurement organization on committees and perform special assignments as necessary for complete staff work on assigned procurements.